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AUTHOR Walters, Norma J.
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ABSTRACT

This monograph discusses the evolution of vocational instruction and how society plays a role in the training from early tribal customs in training to the apprenticeships and then to structuralized instruction in the trade schools, colleges, and universities due to legislation passed as late as 1983. Forces that influenced changes in vocational education and legislation are addressed individually. These include the change from an agrarian society in America into an industrial society, World War I, labor shortage, the economic depression of 1930, a broadening of the interpretation of the population for vocational education, World War II, war production plans, development of postwar activities, racial and language barriers of minority groups in inner cities, a demand for advanced skills and unemployment of unskilled workers, special needs in vocational education, improvement in working conditions, labor organizations, national education associations, other national agencies, state advisory councils, boards of education, teachers, students, parents and voters, community leaders, the state governments and vocational education, impact of Federal legislation, and student organizations. Challenges of the future for vocational education are then explored, including a total restructuring of the nation's social economic systems, the demand for accountability, and excellence in education. (YLB)

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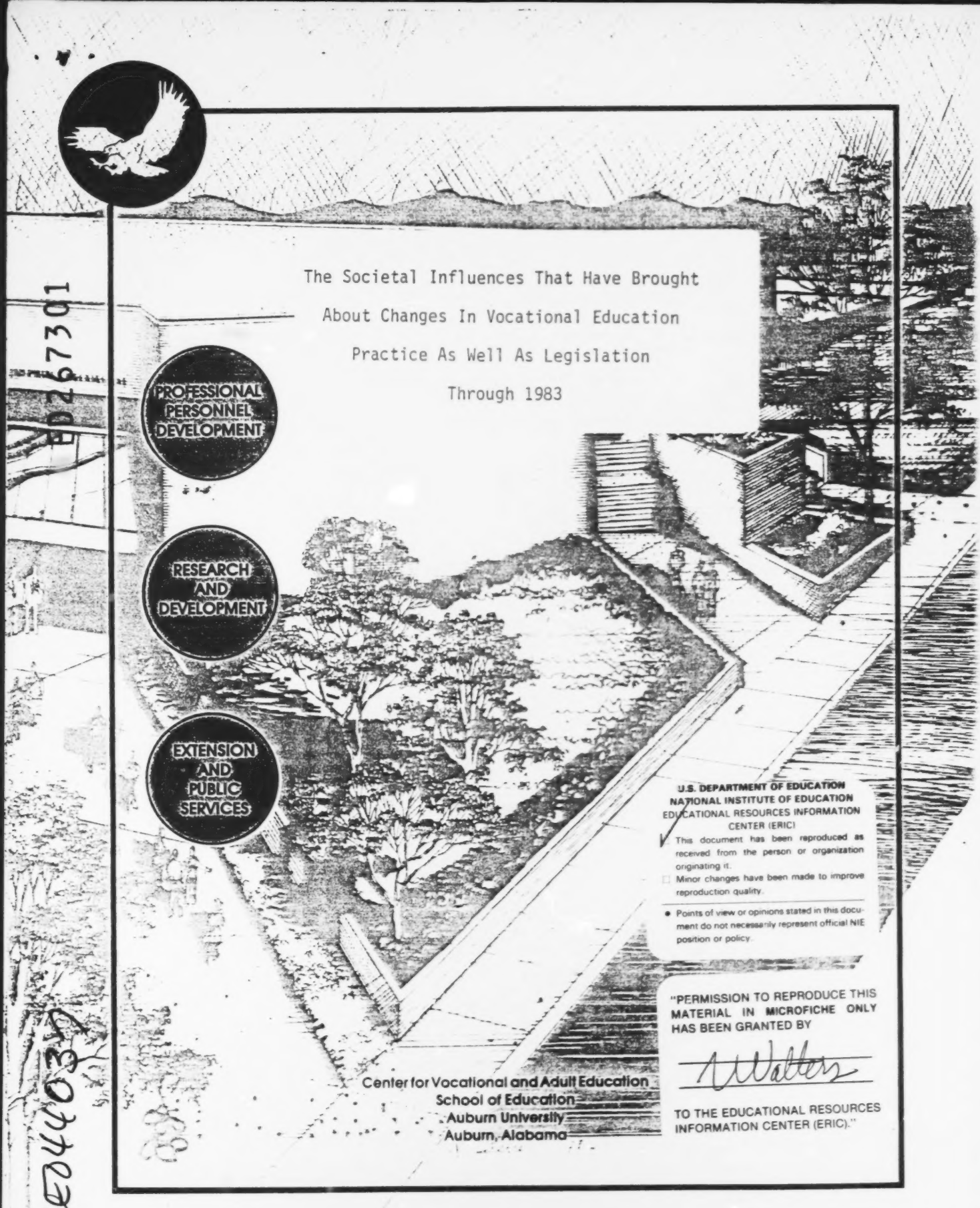

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The Societal Influences That Have Brought About Changes In Vocational Education Practice As Well As Legislation Through 1983

Norma J. Walters, R.N., Ph.D.
Assistant Professor and Coordinator
Health Occupations Education
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama 36849

1986

Center for Vocational and Adult Education
College of Education
Auburn University

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The Societal Influences That Have Brought About Changes In Vocational Education Practice As Well As Legislation Through 1983

Introduction

Vocational education of an informal nature dates back to earliest civilization - it made early beginnings among the different races of mankind. Sons were trained by fathers, daughters were trained by mothers, and the tribe elders trained many eager youths in arts and crafts long before agriculture became established and before towns and villages were built.

In all man's effort to conquer his physical environment in the dangers and rigors of the external world - manual skill and knowledge pertinent to specific tasks have in one way or another been transmitted from man to man from generation to generation. The apprenticeship, which is a form of more or less systematic or organized instruction for attaining vocational competency, can be traced back to ancient times. Before the Caesars ruled the Roman Empire, apprentices were taught in the early civilizations that flourished in the valleys of the Euphrates, the Tigris, in China, and probably elsewhere.

Also, this same form of vocational education (apprenticeship) was used in Greece and Rome. After the fall of Rome in A.D. 476, during the Dark Ages, the apprenticeship training appears to have survived the dreadful blackout of learning. During the feudal

period it gained strength and reached its peak with the aid of the guilds during the revival of learning known as the Renaissance, which began about A.D. 1300 (Struck, 1953).

The craftsmen from the old world brought vocational education of an apprenticeship type to the United States in the early colonial times. These were artifacts in metal, stone, wood, cloth, leather, and other materials transmitted their vocational skills and knowledge, as well as their philosophies of life and their religious faith, to their apprentices.

In spite of the weaknesses, early apprenticeship did provide both social and economic solutions for several groups of that day. First, it provided a means without public tax support to give youth job skills that would make them economically self-supporting. It also provided a means for literacy training, of all youth since this was a requirement placed on the master. The system also provided a means of support for the poor since an apprentice received food, shelter, and clothing from the employer.

At least three basic concepts seemed to arise out of the early apprenticeship period that are relevant as principles of vocational education approximately two hundred years later. These are:

1. the learning of a trade or occupation is bound to the general part of a person's education,

2. most occupations can be taught in school, and

3. vocational education applies to all persons (Barlow, 1967).

In the 1800's, some educators and legislators became concerned as vocational education in the United States was approached gradually and indirectly. During this time, the popular demand was growing for schools to take over the function of vocational training, which until this time had been almost entirely an apprenticeship system. The Latin schools were usually conducted by masters, whose scholarship had been confined to classics and this intensified the demand for practical vocational training (Butts, Freeman, & Cremin, 1953).

Finally, the Land Grant Acts helped to stimulate the vocational school for higher education. Also, these Acts led to the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 which was actually the first legislation enacted for vocational education.

Forces that Influenced Changes in Vocational Education

Vocational education emerged during a period of great change of values, values that were influenced by science, technology, and industrialization. This caused the American life to veer from its traditional direction to a course of unknown destination. The motivating force was a higher standard of living and economic sufficiency which attracted the masses, and fit, rather nicely, into the scheme of industrialization of the nation (Barlow, 1967).

In general, each stage of vocational education began with the emergence of a social condition and as vocational education grew it was directed by many changing forces.

Agrarian Society Changes in America

In the agrarian society, families tended to produce their own goods and provide their own services, one in which one may refer to as basically self-sustaining family units. Over the years, this has changed and today few families produce either goods or services that they utilize personally. The family exists in an entirely different sense and formal and informal education occurs increasingly outside of the family unit.

The American rural society eventually matured into an industrial society which gave rise to urbanization and families began to cluster in small geographic areas and was based on the emerging interdependence of people within institutions. These institutions provided employment and tended to give direction to the lives of the masses and the elite directed the institutions.

Then there was the free enterprise capitalist economic system that developed in the United States which demanded individually owned businesses. This led to competition with efficiency, and maximum utilization at minimum cost that emerged into corporate enterprise and a bureaucratic system of management.

In the urban society there evolved a system of payment to the worker for services provided, thus the thought, men had the

potential to become property owners. This view brought education for culture and education for work and at times has led to a dual system of education. However, it brought into focus the need for the comprehensive school (Thompson, 1973).

World War I

After the Smith-Hughes Act was passed in 1917, the United States became involved in World War I. This act was first seen as an educational program geared to occupational and social needs of the general public, but was challenged to contribute its part toward national victory. Congress passed the act as a war emergency measure and provided for a federally aided program of vocational education of less than college grade for farmers, industrial workers, and homemakers.

World War I was a war of mechanical forces and in order to fight a mechanical war, trained mechanics, technicians, and highly experienced supervisory forces were needed. This effort expanded and created industries. Industry required increasing numbers of trained craftsmen to produce the necessary equipment and supplies.

This represented an advancing stage in the logic of specialization of labor which was inherent in industrialization. These developments increasingly demanded formal provisions and enhancement of at least a few specialized skills. The act's provision for dominant allotments to vocational agriculture and home economics was probably the necessary political price of

public assistance to industries still in a minority position. Enrollments continued to grow even though lack of jobs was the pervasive problem (Thompson, 1973).

Manpower Shortage

During the periods of manpower shortage, vocational education has hailed in the nation's press and in the educational literature as vital to the nation's welfare. Then half a generation later, when the most acute of these manpower shortages were met and the remaining shortages had been forgotten (as in the late twenties and early thirties) vocational education was sharply attacked as a waste of taxpayers money (as in 1952-1954). When employers and consumers were optimistic, the job market expanded rapidly and demanded many more workers than were employed in the past (Evans, 1971).

As further development of vocational education was needed, the George Reed Act of 1929 was passed for agriculture and home economics. The George-Ellzey Act of 1934 was also passed for both agriculture and home economics and trade and industrial education.

Economic Depression of 1930

During the great economic depression of the 1930's modifications in the adult phase of vocational education occurred and provision was made for training unemployed adults. There were one out of four of the employable adults out of work, and vocational education was responsive to training needs that would tend to provide opportunities for unemployed persons to compete

more effectively for jobs. Enrollment figures in vocational education showed substantial increases as the employed took advantage of the vocational training opportunities.

Population for Vocational Education

Another influence in society was the question, "For whom is vocational education intended?". At the beginning of the vocational movement, implementation concentrated upon high school students and employed adults. Later in 1936, through the passage of the George-Deen Act, a contemporary interpretation of the principles of vocational education caused a massive attention to be directed toward vocational guidance as a means of improving the effectiveness with which persons would choose vocations. A new area was also added, Distributive Occupations, and both grew rapidly since the need for such instruction was large (Barlow, 1974).

World War II

The mechanization process which gave the United States the world's most advanced and complex industrial economy was brought to full fruition in the second world war. The U.S. was forced in the early 1940's to multiply its output almost overnight because it was faced with half a world to feed and arm while the cream of its own labor force was committed to military combat.

The exodus of surplus labor inherent in an agricultural economy allowed for increases in output per man and income. Those

who left found higher productivity and incomes in industrial employment. Almost overnight, school shops and laboratories were organized, instructors recruited, and vocational instruction was started twenty-four hours a day, which was oriented to skills in national as well as local demand.

War Production Plans

The National Defense Education Act supported programs to train highly skilled technicians to prepare for aggression. This helped put idle persons to work in refresher or pre-employment courses for manufacturing industries and specific training. Vocational educators accepted these demands and had to meet the training needs presented to them. As a shortage of manpower increased, employers changed standards for employment; race, height, weight, and other details were overlooked when it was necessary to meet time schedules for war production. These situations created new problems for vocational educators. Many established traditions and practices had to be eliminated. All holidays and special days of observance were abandoned when the need for training developed and some were conducted on Sundays. Women were trained to do all kinds of mechanical work and exceeded the ability of men on some jobs. Youth left high school to enter the war production plants, retired employees returned to employment or retraining, and physicaly handicapped workers

participated. There was on the job, instructor, and human relations training, all influencing vocational education.

Development of Postwar Activities

After the war was over many of the agricultural emigrants never returned to the farm, many women never returned full time to the kitchen, and the GI Bill was passed for those who had served in combat. These events created new and profound changes in the U.S. labor markets. Trained college graduates came out of education and training assembly lines and the younger family members kept up the increasing trend to higher education. The employers chose the better prepared persons rather than poorly trained competitors.

Postwar wage increases encouraged labor, replacing mechanization. Discoveries accelerated by war responded with automation, competition from low wage countries put a further premium on increased productivity, and plants made obsolete by the depression and war were eventually replaced. Continued prosperity ended the housing shortage in the suburbs, industry followed in search of building space and trained manpower and it was generally an economy of high opportunity and high displacement (Evans et al., 1969).

Racial and Language Barriers

Many of the persons that had fled to the inner city were marked by racial and language barriers and lacked education. They were faced with widespread discrimination and out of reach

opportunities. The Negroes and other minority groups who were attracted to the cities during and after the war could not follow post-war jobs to the suburbs because of the housing discrimination. Schools for them grew worse, and little or no job preparation was available for rural youth or adults except agricultural which needed them least.

As a generalization, in the rural areas, vocational education was limited in content. In the large central cities, it was poor in quality and in big city suburbs, it hardly existed.

In spite of the broadening of vocational education in 1946 with the George Barden Act, preparation for the occupations had low status. This occurred when female participation was on a steady rise, and the provision for practical nurse education was the only federal recognition for training of women at the time and was very profitable.

Advanced Skills and Unemployment

After the war, the period marked a shift from the primarily blue collar and agriculture, goods producing economy toward a predominance of white collar and service employment. Thus, a changing industrial and occupational mix and a more sophisticated technology sparked rapid growth in the occupations requiring the longest training time and the more advanced skills. The skilled blue collar jobs declined while that of many relatively low skilled service jobs grew. These trends continued until the 1960s

and were brought to public consciousness as unemployment became the key issue.

Youth unemployment tripled the general unemployment rate, and Negro youth doubled that rate. Many of the schools' problems, ironically, resulted from their successor. Some went to higher education, others mobile, but too little was done to prepare for employment of the majority.

The time had arrived when all workers would need some kind of special training for a successful working life. Salable skills in the new environment demanded intellectual as well as manipulative content, and social and political equality demanded equal economic opportunities and results.

Special Needs in Vocational Education

The high unemployment rate among youth was directed at legislation for all groups of people and special needs in vocational education which resulted in the Vocational Education Acts of 1963, which included the business occupations. Overall enrollments increased from 4.5 to 6 million individuals between 1964 and 1966. This led to even greater expansion in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 to maintain, extend, improve, and develop new programs in vocational education suited to the needs, interests, and abilities. In 1972, the Education Amendments created a Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education in the United States Office of Education (USOE) and included a

community college unit. Later, in 1976, the new Vocational Amendments gave national priority to the handicapped, disadvantaged, limited English language, minorities, postsecondary programs in vocational education and programs of national significance.

Improvement in Working Conditions

During the industrial revolution, the chief influence of improvement of the lot of workers was unemployment insurance, old age assistance programs, eight hour day and forty hour week, child labor laws, and later protection of women workers, safety codes and regulations in working conditions, workman's compensation for injuries on the job, and the rights for collective bargaining. Many of the social and economic reforms which have become effective since 1920 should have been initiated in the early nineteenth century when machines and mass production developments were causing social and economic problems.

The workers during this period did not exert sufficient influence to stimulate a social reform movement to meet occupational needs. The employers were too much concerned in protecting their financial interests to want any reforms and the educators and general public were not interested enough or not enlightened enough to recognize the need for action. Many lives and destroyed property may have been avoided if social legislation which is in effect now could have been secured a century earlier.

All of the improved working conditions have benefitted vocational education.

Labor Organizations

Labor groups have been strong at all times in their support of educational programs. They have worked primarily for the elimination of child labor because the children of labor have been exploited in factories and mines (McCarthy, 1952).

National Education Associations

There are many educational associations which have had an impact on vocational education and legislation, the following are the most influential:

1. American Vocational Association - constantly serves to examine and revise policies.

2. American Association of Community and Junior College - has particular interest in post-secondary adult, vocational, and technical education.

3. National Education Association (NEA) - believes that preparation of children for careers, vocations, and productive jobs should be a basic policy of education and programs developed for all children which will assure equal opportunity for career and occupational development. Among NEA affiliates which have had a significant impact on vocational education policy is the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

4. American Association of School Administrators - published Man, Education and Work.

5. National Association of Secondary School Principals - states that public educational systems have a basic obligation to aid the preparation of all young people for effectiveness in the world of work.

6. American Council on Education - published the report on Man, Education and Work which had a considerable impact, especially on post-secondary vocational and technical education.

7. National Society for the Study of Education - publishes yearbooks, some of which have dealt with The Place of Vocational Subjects in the High School Curriculum, and Vocational Studies for College Entrance.

8. The Council of Chief State School Officers.

Other National Agencies

Other national agencies which have affected vocational education are:

1. National Society for Promotion of Industrial Education (now American Vocational Association-AVA) - influenced passage of Smith-Hughes Act.

2. United States Chamber of Commerce.

3. AFL-CIO - supported job training and that all young people must have access to job training under vocational education and under the apprenticeship programs.

State Advisory Council

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 as amended in 1968, provided for the establishment of a National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE) and required that each state wishing to receive funds under that Act establish a State Advisory Council on Vocational Education (SACVE). Since that time, the state advisory council has advised the state board on the development of the state plan and on policy matters arising in the administration of the state plan. In addition, the SACVE has published and distributed reports on their evaluations, including an annual report with recommendations for changes warranted by the evaluation. Also, the SACVE is required to conduct at least one open meeting each year when the public is given the opportunity to express views concerning vocational education.

Each State Advisory Council submits its annual budget to Washington and appropriated funds go directly to the councils from the USOE to be used at the sole discretion of the councils for the employment of staff and for evaluation and studies.

The SACVE is free to evaluate any facet of the state's programs, services, or activities. The council reports to the state board which must act upon the recommendations by either (1) accepting or (2) rejecting them. If rejected, the recommendations must be returned to them immediately. With such a council, it is

obvious, it can have considerable power regarding vocational education in the state.

Board of Education

Vocational education policy on the local level must be formalized by elected representatives of the people - the Board of Education. The board is a creation of the state and governed by state laws and its actions are guided by state policies. Policy making is a responsibility of the board within the framework of federal and state statutes and it must also look to the community for inputs. These come from community agencies and leaders and from the board's professional staff of administrators and teachers.

Teachers

The expertise of teachers must be recognized and utilized on the secondary and community college levels as it has been on the college and university levels. Provision for faculty input should be built into the policy-making structure of the school and community - by establishing more effective relationships between administrators and teacher organizations.

Students

While students are interested in exercising more control over their environment, high school students have been more concerned about control of the internal affairs of the schools. The vocational educators should be aware of the student's potential

power in the community and should seek input from student groups in the development of educational policies.

Parents and Voters

While parent and taxpayer groups seldom initiate policy matters relating to education, they do have the power to influence boards of education on issues of consideration. The parents are a vital link in the educational system in each and every community.

Community Leaders

The community is an interdependent social system with many forces at work influencing social policy, including education. The members of the board may be influenced by community leaders in government, business, industry, the professions, and others. There may be key people in the community who make the decisions and instruct the board members how to vote. The vocational administrator should always study the power structure of the community so that he/she knows who the opinion leaders are and who influences policy decisions.

The State Government and Vocational Education

The state government is very important to vocational education. It is at this level that all forces - social, economic, and political - are brought to bear on educational problems and policy. The legislature has the final decision on basic policy questions regarding the public schools of the state (Wenrich & Wenrich, 1974).

Impact of Federal Legislation

The financial support for vocational education from the federal government was meant to be "stimulating," not "entrenching" legislation. The funds were to be used for the development of new programs, offsetting costs of items such as equipment, which can make the initiation of a new program difficult for local schools. State and local funds were to be gradually allocated to assume support for the programs. This has not happened. Once the programs were initiated, they continued to receive federal funds. However, vocational education programs of the nation have advanced more rapidly with federal funds than would have been possible without them.

Federal legislation has also generated an impact on quality teaching in vocational education. There is a generalization that some of the best teaching has occurred in vocational education at the secondary level because the teachers are more attuned to the needs of youngsters and used more visual aids and better teaching methods than did their counterparts in secondary teachers (no research supports this). Also, another impact of legislation was the separation of vocational and general education. This occurred with the separation of the Vocational Act of 1963 from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The administrative structures and supporting systems are different and the offerings of public school general education and vocational

education must be justified on a different basis. Another outgrowth of federal legislation has been a basis for the rationale or justification of vocational education (Thompson, 1973).

Student Organizations

Other impacts of federal legislation has been the stimulus provided for youth organizations in areas of vocational education. On September 28, 1991, the U.S. Department of Education issued a policy statement for all the following vocational student organizations which are a vital and an integral part of each vocational educational program:

- American Industrial Arts Student Association (AIASA)
- Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)
- Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL)
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Future Homemakers of America (FHA)
- Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)
- National Postsecondary Agriculture Student Organizations (NPASO)
- Office Education Association (OEA)
- Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA)

The occasion was very special as Secretary of Education and Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education, Robert M.

Worthington, signed the first official policy statement issued by the U.S. Department of Education. The policy statement officially recognized and reaffirmed a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the U.S. Department of Education and the Vocational Student Organizations and strongly endorsed the objectives of the organizations and has strived to involve their thinking in the improvement of vocational education (National HOSA, 1982).

Challenges of the Future

Challenges of the future for vocational education will be a tremendous task as those concerned reflect back through the years. The societal influences that have brought about changes in vocational education throughout the years are varied and many. Vocational education emerged during a period of great change of values, values that were influenced by science, technology, and industrialization. As the years passed, each stage of vocational education began with the emergence of a social condition and was directed by changing forces such as the agrarian society, World War I, manpower shortages, economic depression of 1930, World War II, war production plans, development of postwar activities, racial and language barriers, advanced skills and unemployment, special needs, working conditions, and labor organizations. In addition, the National Education Association, national and state advisory councils, boards of education, teachers, students,

parents, voters, community leaders, state government, vocational education, federal legislation, and student organizations have served as strong forces affecting vocational education.

Today, the United States is going through a total restructuring and a period in which all the institutions--private businesses, government, schools, and organizations are going to change as the nation strives to build the economy through our information society with global ties. The economy is dramatically different from previous economies and our place in the world as a major industrial nation has focused on meeting the needs of its citizens.

Now in the 1980s, the restructuring is going to affect almost every family organization, community group, and educational institution. In terms of the schools, consumers have indicated that educational institutions simply have to change to meet some of the new realities of our social economic systems. The world is focused now on the concepts of fair exchange and accountability, not only in education, but also every other aspect of American society.

Educators need to be aware of certain aspects of changes in our society and keep abreast of the job market changes which include the positions as well as job requirements. This means that ongoing vocational education will be essential. The childish and petty bickering between vocational educators and liberal arts

and other teachers has to be stopped (Annison, 1983). It's going to be important that the perceptions and misperceptions that hamper us are removed and that we show what is really the truth about vocational education. The function the teachers are performing is one that can make or break an individual for life and the educators need to understand that vocational education is one of the truest areas we have in education (Maxwell, 1983) and the only way we are going to change our image is to take it upon ourselves to talk about what we are doing in our vocational schools (Mills, 1983).

The challenge now is to put vocational education in the limelight as it is very complex. Programs have changed greatly in the past decade in response to rapid changes in business, industry, and the community and they are going to change even more during the next 10 years. Success is related in many ways to community involvement and projects designed to improve qualifications of persons who serve in vocational education programs, including teachers, administrators and supervisors. In addition, vocational guidance and counseling personnel should be provided to meet the commitment to excellence in the vocational classrooms and laboratories (Turlington, 1983).

Vocational educators must continue to work in directing the future of vocational training in education and must take the leadership in developing and expanding the programs and being able

to work with the continuing social, economic and political forces in our society. This relationship will further strengthen the educational programs as the future, not only of our communities and our state, but also our country rests upon what is done in education.

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